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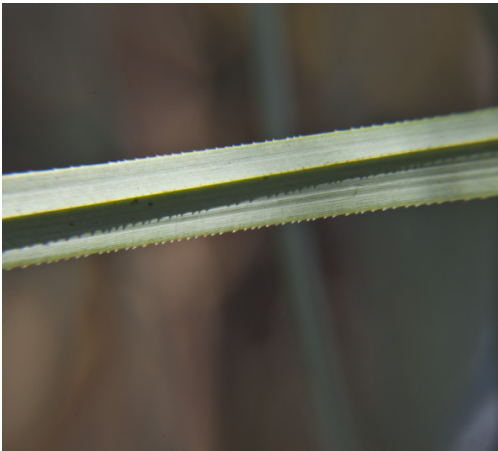
THE SAWGRASS MARSH



The sawgrass marsh is a wet habitat.

The Everglades has many **habitats** for plants and animals to call home. One is a kind of **freshwater wetland** called the **sawgrass marsh**. In the Everglades, the sawgrass marsh can stretch as far as the eye can see.

Sawgrass marshes are open, grassy wetlands. Sawgrass marshes are usually flooded with water for most of the year. The water is too deep to allow trees to grow. You won't see any trees in the sawgrass marsh. With no trees for shade, the sawgrass marsh is a very sunny habitat.



Close up of sawgrass sedge.

Sawgrass is the most common plant found in this habitat. Interestingly, sawgrass is not really a grass. It is a **sedge**, a group of plants that have sharp "teeth" along the edges of each blade.

Like the pinelands, sawgrass marshes benefit from **periodic** fire. Sawgrass will grow back after a fire because the wet soils protect sawgrass roots. Fires help sawgrass habitats by **limiting** the **invasion** of other plants that would crowd out the sawgrass.

The sawgrass marsh is home only to plants and animals that can **thrive** in this watery habitat. Small freshwater fishes like the Gambusia or mosquito fish live here. They get their name because their favorite food is mosquito **larvae**! Birds like the Great Blue Heron, **amphibians** like the pig frog, and **reptiles** like the American alligator all live here.



Gambusia, or mosquito fish.



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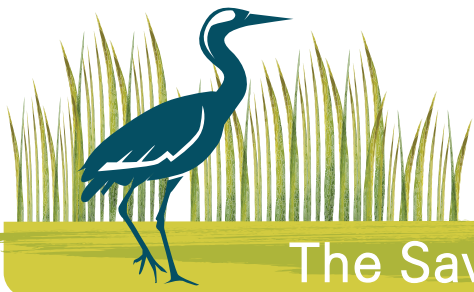
The Sawgrass Marsh Questions

Directions: Answer the following questions about the Sawgrass Marsh habitat in the Everglades.

Remember to use your vocabulary glossary if you need help with a vocabulary word.

Circle the Correct Answer

1. How does the author describe the sawgrass marsh? Select all that apply.
 - a. The sawgrass marsh is a freshwater wetland.
 - b. The sawgrass marsh is open and sunny.
 - c. The sawgrass marsh is dotted with trees.
 - d. The sawgrass marsh is covered with shrubs.
2. What is the meaning of wetland as it is used in this text?
 - a. A habitat after a very heavy rain.
 - b. A series of large puddles used by animals.
 - c. A habitat flooded with water most of the year.
 - d. A dry habitat after a hurricane.
3. Which sentence describes the reason you won't find trees in the sawgrass marsh?
 - a. The water in the sawgrass marsh is too deep to allow trees to grow.
 - b. Sawgrass marshes are open, grassy wetlands.
 - c. The sawgrass marsh can stretch as far as the eye can see.
 - d. With no trees for shade, the sawgrass marsh is a very sunny habitat.
4. Based on the information about the sawgrass marsh, with which statements would the author agree? Select all that apply.
 - a. Sawgrass is the dominant plant found here.
 - b. Sawgrass is a grass that animals love to eat.
 - c. Sawgrass will die if there is a fire.
 - d. Sawgrass has sharp teeth on each blade.
- 5a. What would you infer about which animals would make their home in sawgrass marsh?
 - a. You can find Bald Eagle nests in the sawgrass marsh.
 - b. You can find animals that can move through the toothy sawgrass.
 - c. You can find some saltwater fish in the sawgrass marsh.
 - d. You can find airplants in the sawgrass marsh.
- 5b. What pieces of evidence support your answer above? Select all that apply.
 - a. There are no trees in the sawgrass marsh.
 - b. The sawgrass marsh is not a good habitat for animals.
 - c. The sawgrass marsh is a freshwater wetland.
 - d. Gambusia eat a lot of mosquito larvae.



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The Sawgrass Marsh Teacher Guide

Annually Assessed Benchmarks:

LAFS.3.RI.1.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. (Selectable Text)

LAFS.3.RI.1.2 Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea. (MC)

LAFS.3.RI.2.5 Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently. (MC)

LAFS.3.RI.3.7 Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur). (MC)

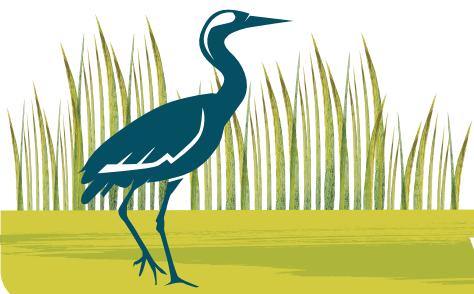
LAFS.3.RI.3.8 Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence). (Multiselect)

Answer Key

1. How does the author describe the sawgrass marsh? Select all that apply.
 - a. **The sawgrass marsh is a freshwater wetland.**
 - b. **The sawgrass marsh is open and sunny.**
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2. What is the meaning of wetland as it is used in this text?
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4. Based on the information about the sawgrass marsh, with which statements would the author agree? Select all that apply.
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 - c. Sawgrass will die if there is a fire.
 - d. **Sawgrass has sharp teeth on each blade.**
- 5a. What would you infer about which animals would make their home in sawgrass marsh?
 - a. You can find Bald Eagle nests in the sawgrass marsh.
 - b. **You can find animals that can move through the toothy sawgrass.**
 - c. You can find some saltwater fish in the sawgrass marsh.
 - d. You can find airplants in the sawgrass marsh.

5b. What pieces of evidence support your answer above? Select all that apply.

- a. **There are no trees in the sawgrass marsh.**
- b. The sawgrass marsh is not a good habitat for animals.
- c. **The sawgrass marsh is a freshwater wetland.**
- d. Gambusia eat a lot of mosquito larvae.



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Vocabulary Glossary

Use the glossary below to look up the vocabulary words from the habitat factsheets.

Vocabulary for Sawgrass Marsh

Amphibian	Cold-blooded animals with a backbone that have gills and live in water as young but breathe air as adults
Freshwater	Water that is not salty
Habitat	The place where a plant or animal lives where it can find food, water, shelter, and space
Invasion	The incoming or spread of something usually hurtful
Larvae	A young wingless form of many insects that hatches from an egg
Limit	To stop or prevent an increase in something
Periodic	Happening regularly over a period of time
Reptile	A cold-blooded animal with a backbone that breathes air and usually has skin covered with dry scales or bony plates
Sawgrass	A tall plant that if examined closely will reveal tiny ridges, or teeth, along the length of its sides
Sawgrass Marsh	A habitat that is filled with sawgrass and usually flooded with water for most of the year
Sedge	A plant that is like grass but has solid stems and grows in tufts in marshes
Thrive	To grow or develop very well; Flourish
Wetland	An area of land (such as a marsh or swamp) that is covered with shallow water